

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

.....

ALNWICK UNION.

.....

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

\* 1896. \*



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1897.



# Annual Report

## OF THE

### Medical Officer of Health.

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GENTLEMEN,

The early months of the year 1896 were, in this district, characterised by a quite exceptional mildness, and by an almost total absence of frost and snow. The rainfall also during those months was below average. Spring came comparatively early and the first part of the summer, although the heat was never excessive, was accompanied by less rain than usual, until in July, serious apprehensions were felt both in connexion with agriculture and water supplies. This anxiety was entirely relieved in August, and from the beginning of September till the end of the year the rainfall was excessive and almost continuous. The temperature during the beginning of the winter remained comparatively high, for that time of the year, and no snow fell and only slight and short continued frosts were experienced.

The above somewhat extreme conditions as regards drought and heavy rainfall do not seem to have had any prejudicial effects on the health of the inhabitants of the district, and I am glad to be able to bring under your notice vital statistics of a much more encouraging nature than last year. The birth rate is slightly lower than last year and the year before, although higher than in 1893. The death rate shows a very marked improvement on last year, although it hardly reaches the record of 1894, in which year the rate per thousand was .41 lower than this year.

The subjoined table compares the vital statistics for the last three years.

	Births.	Birth Rate.	Deaths.	Death Rate.
1894	338	27.75	176	14.45
1895	337	27.67	222	18.23
1896	330	27.10	181	14.86

From this it will be seen that the births for 1896 are respectively 7 and 8 below the births for 1895, while the deaths for 1896 are 41 below those for 1895, and 5 above 1894.

Of the deaths 88 were of males and 93 of females. The following table shows the distribution of the deaths as regards the sub-districts and compares with the preceding two years.

	Warkworth.	Embleton.	Alnwick.
1894	91	76	9
1895	130	82	10
1896	101	68	12

This shows that the number of deaths in the Warkworth sub-district fell in 1896 to 101, from 130 in 1895. In Embleton sub-district also there is a marked improvement, the number being 68 in 1896, as against 82 in 1895. In Alnwick sub-district there is an increase of two deaths from last year, but this cannot be taken to mean much, as the number of inhabitants in this sub-district is so small that the death rate is necessarily very variable. The deaths may be analysed as follows, and alongside of the numbers for 1896, 1 place for comparison those for 1895.

	one year.	1 year and under 5 yrs.	5 years and under 15 yrs.	15 years and under 25 yrs.	25 yrs. and under 65 yrs.	over 65 yrs.
1895	58	15	16	9	30	75
1896	43	14	11	11	40	53

It will be observed that diminution in the number of deaths is most marked at the extremes of life. One would like to see the infantile death-rate still further diminished, and this will doubtless eventually be accomplished by the gradual spread of a knowledge of the proper methods of dieting young children.

The greatest number of deaths in any one month, viz. 21, occurred in October and the smallest number, viz. 8, in September. The return of the whole district, as already mentioned, is 181, equal to a rate of 14·86 per thousand per annum. The death-rate in the Warkworth sub-district was 16·21 and thus exceeded the general death-rate, as also did the rate in the Alnwick sub-district, which was 17·39. The death-rate in the Embleton sub-district, however, compensated for this as it was only 13·12.

The births during the year 1896 were 330 in number, 179 being males and 151 females. This gives a birth-rate for the district of 27·10. The births were distributed as follows:

Warkworth.	Embleton.	Alnwick.
Births. Birth-rate.	Births. Birth-rate.	Births. Birth-rate.
181 30·66.	133 25·29.	6 8·69.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year 1896, 147 cases of infectious diseases were notified in the district. Of these 121 were cases of scarlet fever, 15 of erysipelas, 5 typhoid fever, 5 diphtheria, and 1 of croup. The greatest number for one month, viz., 31, was notified in February, and the smallest number viz., 1 in September. The distribution of the notified infectious diseases may be seen from the following table.

Sub-district	Scarlet fever.	Erysipelas.	Typhoid fever.	Diphtheria	Croup
Warkworth	51	4	2	2	1
Embleton	61	10	3	3	0
Alnwick	9	1	0	6	0

The total for each sub-district including all kinds of notifiable disease is as follows.

Warkworth sub-district	...	...	...	60
Embleton do.	...	...	...	77
Alnwick do.	...	...	...	10

This contrasts favourable with the year 1895 when 187 cases of infectious disease were notified. It may be specially noted that while in 1895 9 cases of typhoid fever were notified in the Warkworth district, only 2 were notified in 1896. All through the year 1896 scarlet fever has been present in some part of the district. During the early months it was most prevalent in the Warkworth sub-district and to a less extent in the Alnwick sub-district. In the latter part of the year the Embleton sub-district suffered most from scarlet fever, Longhoughton and Rennington being the places most affected.

Typhoid fever occurred in two localities in the Warkworth sub-district, viz., Felton (one case) and Tugston Cottage (one case). In the first case no local cause could be found, but in the second the disease was caused by the proximity of the dwelling to a leaking sewer which was put right. Typhoid fever occurred in three localities in the Embleton sub-district, viz., Edlingham Newtown, Doxford New Houses, and Craster Coast Guard Station, one case at each place. The case at Edlingham Newtown was the third (two in 1895) caused by drinking water from a polluted well. The matter was dealt with by the Council. The case at Doxford New Houses could not be traced to any local insanitary condition, and with the case at Craster the Council had no power to deal as it occurred in a building belonging to the Admiralty.

Diphtheria has shown itself in three different localities, viz., Warkworth (2 cases), Little Mill (one case), and Dene Cottage, Eglington (2 cases) and the causes from which it arose have been dealt with.

During the year 1896 I have had to give closing orders for schools at Bolton and Rennington for scarlet fever and at Acklington and Alnmouth for measles.

The deaths from notifiable infectious diseases have been as follows :

Sub-district.	Scarlet fever.	Diphtheria.	Croup.	Erysipelas.
Warkworth	4	1	1	1
Embleton	1	2	0	0
Alnwick	0	0	0	0
Totals	5	3	1	1

The total of deaths from notifiable infectious disease was 10, giving a death rate of .82 per thousand per annum. The number of deaths in 1895 was 15, giving a death-rate of 1.23

### WATER SUPPLIES.

At Alnmouth the 3 inch main has been extended for a distance of 80 yards down to Crow's Nest Lane, and a fire hydrant fixed at the end. Hydrants have also been put in at the 4 other places requested by the Parish Council. At Brotherwick since the risk of the pollution of the hinds' water supply has been pointed out, a great improvement has been made. A service tank has been built, and the water conveyed in 1½ inch cast iron pipes to the cottages. At Broxfield a new water supply is under way for the farm, instead of the pump-well which is within 6 feet of the cattle yard. A scheme has been mooted by the Eglington Parish Council for re-laying the water mains which are furred up, and for otherwise improving and modernising their water works which are greatly in need of it. A sample of this water has been analysed and found to be satisfactory. At Greensfield a water supply has been carried out by the Castle authorities, which is now in use, instead of the well at the bottom of a steep bank over which the drainage from the house and stables flows. This new supply is from a bore hole sunk sometime ago in Swansfield Park, and the permanency of the yield having been tested, a service tank has been built, and the water conveyed to Greensfield, a distance of about ¾ of a mile in cast iron pipes.

The Council has extended the Hauxley and Togston water works by taking in the second Sturton Grange spring, also by taking a supply to Bondicar and to Togston Barns at a cost of about £300. Newton Barns has now received a good supply of water by the extension of the Brunton water works to it by this Council, by arrangement with Major Browne. According to agreement a maximum supply of 1,000 gallons a day is provided by means of a small throttle pipe, which is capable of delivering 6 pints a minute, and the pressure at this farm is quite sufficient for all practical purposes. The well at Coquet House, Warkworth Moor, has been protected from animals. Arrangements have been made with the caretaker of the Butts water works at Warkworth to clean out the

reservoir and settle wells once a year, and to scour out the main quarterly. Formal complaints having been lodged against the insufficiency of the Burghers private water works at Warkworth, this matter has been fully inquired into. Some small improvements have since been made to these water works, and although the low pressure at the head of the village is due chiefly to the small fall from the reservoir It is greatly to be regretted that the Burghers' committee have neither seen fit to relay the pipes, which are almost completely furred up, nor to vest them in this Council, who could then do so, as the higher part of Warkworth is suffering from a sanitary drawback in consequence.

Water certificates have been granted under the Public Health (Water) Act, 1879, for new buildings at Chripton Bank, Low Hauxley and Warkworth.

Before leaving the subject of water supplies I may state that our neighbouring District Council at Amble deserve to be complimented on their new water works, consisting of over eleven miles of pipes, they have just carried out from Newton and Hazon, at a cost of £6,600. The farm at Brainshaugh in our rural district is supplied from it, but the farms at Acklington Park and Morwick are not yet connected with it, although greatly in need of good water. The Amble Urban District Council have also taken a water supply to Hazon Lee in this rural district, by the laying of 1,310 yards of metal pipes, by arrangement with Mr W. E. Lawson, the owner of some of the springs connected with their new water works.

The following farms and cottages which have been reported on by the Sanitary Inspector are very badly off for water:—Abberwick (Acklington High Park), Broomhill Cottage, Craig's House, Dean Moor, Glanton Mile End, Glanton North Field, Middle Cawledge Park, Sturton Grange Farm, and West Cawledge Park.

#### DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

At Boulmer some openings in the main sewer have been trapped and the pipe ventilated at the highest points. The Admiralty have connected their private drain to the sewer to prevent it polluting a water course. At Boulmer Moor (Scot's Gap) the trustees of the Douglas estate have laid private drains into the new sewer laid for them by the late Authority, and the sewage ditch has been cleaned out. At Craster the drainage of Mr R. Grey's fish-yard has been repaired. At Hign Powburn new trapped gulleys have been provided for the cottages. The main sewer at Newton-on-the-Moor has been extended with about 100 yards of 6-inch sanitary pipes. The drainage behind some houses in Dial Place, Warkworth, has been improved. The Warkworth sewerage scheme has gradually



become larger and larger until it now consists of laying an intercepted sewer from the bottom of the Brewery Lane round the village nearly to Beal Bank, thus intercepting nearly all the drains and sewers in Warkworth at a cost of about £500. This is practically what the Local Government Board have suggested, and as it is the most modern and approved method of sewerage, it will most likely be the most satisfactory in the end. When this new sewer is laid the owners of private drains should be requested to relay them with sanitary pipes where necessary, and in those cases where they pass under houses, with iron pipes. The public sewer at West Hedgeley has been improved and ventilated. New sewerage schemes for Glanton and Togston Hall are under the consideration of the Council.

### PLANS PASSED.

The only townships which have byelawe under urban powers are Alnmouth, Embleton, Togston, and Warkworth. A new Buildings Committee for the consideration of plans has been appointed, which was often suggested by the Surveyor who thought the onus should not remain with him to state whether plans should be passed or not. During 1896 plans have been sanctioned for the following new places at Alnmouth:—A plan from Mr O. Blyth, builder, for a new shop front for the premises occupied by Mrs Stephenson. A plan from the Castle authorities for an oriel bay window at Melrose Cottage. A plan from Mr Archbold on behalf of the Alnmouth Gas Company for alterations to the manager's house. A plan from Messrs Watson and Scott, architects, for alterations to the property of Mr J. W. Pease. Plans have also been passed for a new villa, now being erected from the designs of Mr M. Temple Wilson, architect, next to house he has just built adjoining the Alnmouth Reading Room.

At Christon Bank (in the township of Embleton) a plan by Mr M. T. Wilson, architect, has been approved for a four-roomed cottage for Mr Geo. Douglas.

At Togston a plan from Messrs R. and G. Brown, builders, has been passed for raising the walls of the Mission Chapel.

For Warkworth a plan by Mr M. T. Wilson, architect, has been passed for taking down and re-building the stables at the end of the garden of Ivy House, and late in the year a second plan by Mr Wilson was approved for alterations and additions to the same house which is the summer residence of Mr Geo. H. Davidson, of Newcastle. A plan by Messrs J. and G. Green, builders, has been passed for an addition to Churchside Villa. A plan from Alnwick Castle Estate Office has been sanctioned for a new house near the top of Castle Street. A plan by Mr M. Temple



Wilson, architect, has been approved for the addition of four rooms to the house belonging to Mrs Robinson. A plan by Mr A. Stockwell, architect, has been sanctioned for alterations consisting of sanitary and domestic offices at Fairfield, the seat of George Sanderson, Esq.

#### THE PRIVATE STREETS (WORKS) ACT, 1892.

Since the adoption of this Act last year Grosvenor Terrace, Alnmouth, and the private streets at Togston, have been laid with random whinstone chip paving, which has made a great improvement.

#### THE DAIRIES, 'COW-SHEDS', AND MILK SHOPS' ORDER, 1885.

During last year the following cow-sheds, &c., have been registered:—

At Acklington, Mr R. Young's byres for 12 cows.

At Glanton, Mr Geo. Dryden, for 4 cows.

At Short Law Brow, near Felton, Mr T. Dobson, for 7 cows.

#### SUMMARY OF OTHER NUISANCES ABATED.

The Sanitary Inspector, who is now vested with authority to serve informal notices regarding sanitary defects and nuisances of a minor character, has attended to several small matters without bringing them under the notice of the Council. The following is a brief summary of the principal nuisances abated during last year:—At Alnmouth, 3 offensive privies at the top of Grosvenor Terrace, have been converted into closets. At Railway Terrace, Bilton, a refuse heap has been removed from the water tank, and the poultry pens and pigsty which were near it have been abolished. At Bolton Mill several nuisances have been abated, and nearly the whole on-stead re-modelled. At Boulmer some excessively large ashpits, which in some cases were used by six families, have been cleaned out. At Christon Bank Station Cottages, where scarlet fever has occurred, the premises have been re-built at a more remote distance, but a great improvement would be effected if galvanised iron wagons on wheels were provided to make a readier means of cleansing. This observation also applies to those at Longhoughton Station.

At Craster the owners of the Cottages at the north side, which had no privies, have made some effort to comply with the sanitary requirements of the Council, and, considering all the circumstances, these closets fairly meet the exigencies of the case. At East Link Hall ashpits have been built for the hinds' cottages. At Eglington Broomhouse several nuisances have been abated and the onstead satisfactorily re-modelled. At Glanton Mr Marshall's stable is kept in a less offensive condition than formerly; and the owner of

the cottage adjoining has provided a proper closet for it. At the cottages at Longhoughton where scarlet fever occurred, the sanitary offices have been rearranged. Attention has been drawn to the want of some simple system of ventilation, without draughts, at Longhoughton and Dunstan schools, but the managers seem to resent the intervention of the Council's officers in anything connected with the sanitation of public school premises. At Rennington the sewage ditch has been cleaned out. Overcrowding at Rock Mill has been reported upon. At Shilbottle the cottage south of the church has been spouted and provided with a complete set of sanitary and domestic offices. At South Acton the stone conduits which passed from the cattle yards up to the foundation of the farm house, and gave access to rats, and emitted stench into the dwelling, have been disconnected from the house.

A public scavenger has been appointed for the township of Togston, which arrangement has proved to be an immense sanitary advantage. At Togston Barns a pond of sewage near the eastern cottage has been drained into a conduit close by. The floors of the cottages have been cemented, and some sinks have been provided, but a mistake has been made by laying the drains with open jointed field pipes. At Togston Wood Houses some small repairs have been done, but have made so little difference to the sanitary condition that they are not yet fit for human habitation. The tenants have been ejected but they went in again the same day. The owner is under notice a second time to make them fit to live in.

I must express my obligation to the Inspector, Mr M. Temple Wilson for the latter part of this report dealing with water supplies, drainage, plans, and abatement of nuisances, and also for his ready co-operation in any work in which we have been associated during the past year.

Finally my sincere thanks are due to the chairman and members of this Council for their uniform courtesy and support, which have done much to render pleasant and satisfactory the duties of my office.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

SCOTT PURVES, M.D., Ed.,

Medical Officer of Health and  
Fellow of the British Institute of Public Health.



PLATE 30

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